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PATENT
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PATENT APPLN. NO. 10/733,198
RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.111

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A transfer needle assembly comprising:
a cap-like outside guide member having a top surface and a skirt portion;

a tubular inside guide member that is positioned in the outside guide member; and

a puncture member which passes through the top surface of the outside guide member and has a proximal end and a distal end,

wherein:

the puncture member is a tubular member having at its proximal end a tip fitting portion for fitting a syringe tip and having at its distal end a puncture needle;

the puncture needle is provided with a liquid passage;

the liquid passage communicates with the tip fitting portion;

the inside guide member is capable of sliding along an inner wall of the skirt portion of the outside guide member from a position where a distal end of the puncture needle is retracted in an inside of the inside guide member, to a position where the distal end of the puncture needle projects outside of the inside guide member;

in the position where the distal end of the puncture needle is retracted in the inside of the inside guide member, the outside guide

member and the inside guide member are releasably engaged with each other so as to be incapable of sliding; and

the engagement between the outside guide member and the inside guide member is ~~releasable~~ released by insertion of a mouth portion of a vial into the inside guide member.

2. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 1, wherein the skirt portion of the outside guide member includes:

an annular projection provided in an inner wall of a distal end of the skirt portion;

a plurality of slits extending in an axial direction of the outside guide member formed in a portion of the skirt portion on a proximal end side with respect to the annular projection; and

a plurality of flexible engaging claws formed between pairs of the plurality of slits, the plurality of flexible engaging claws inclining toward an inside of the outside guide member in a distal end direction,

wherein a proximal end side of the inside guide member includes:

an annular projection provided in an outer wall of a proximal end;

a plurality of slits extending in an axial direction of the inside guide member formed in a proximal end portion of the inside guide member corresponding to the plurality of engaging claws; and

a plurality of flexible pushing claws formed between pairs of the plurality of slits, the plurality of flexible pushing claws inclining toward an inside of the inside guide member in a proximal end direction, and

wherein, at the position where the distal end of the puncture needle is receded in the inside of the inside guide member, the engaging claws and the proximal end of the inside guide member are engaged with each other and the annular projection of the outside guide member and the annular projection of the inside guide member are engaged with each other, and by inserting the mouth portion of the vial into the inside guide member, the pushing claws push the engaging claws to the outside, causing the engaging claws to deform and release the engagement between the outside guide member and the inside guide member.

3. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 1, wherein the puncture member is formed integrally with the outside guide member.

4. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 2, wherein the puncture member is formed integrally with the outside guide member.

5. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 1, comprising a puncture needle insertion portion axially provided in the top surface of the outside guide member and having an opening that passes through the top surface,

wherein the puncture member is provided separately from the outside guide member and is inserted into the opening of the puncture needle insertion portion.

6. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 2, comprising a puncture needle insertion portion axially provided in the top surface of the outside guide member and having an opening that passes through the top surface,

wherein the puncture member is provided separately from the outside guide member and is inserted into the opening of the puncture needle insertion portion.

7. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 1, comprising a plurality of vertical ribs provided in an inner wall of the inside guide member.

8. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 2, comprising a plurality of vertical ribs provided in an inner wall of the inside guide member.

9. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 3, comprising a plurality of vertical ribs provided in an inner wall of the inside guide member.

10. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 4, comprising a plurality of vertical ribs provided in an inner wall of the inside guide member.

11. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 5, comprising a plurality of vertical ribs provided in an inner wall of the inside guide member.

12. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 6, comprising a plurality of vertical ribs provided in an inner wall of the inside guide member.

13. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 1, comprising a collar formed in the distal end of the skirt portion of the outside guide member, the collar inclining to the outside in the distal end direction of the outside guide member.

14. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 2, comprising a collar formed in the distal end of the skirt portion of the outside guide member, the collar inclining to the outside in the distal end direction of the outside guide member.

15. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 3, comprising a collar formed in the distal end of the skirt portion of the outside guide member, the collar inclining to the outside in the distal end direction of the outside guide member.

16. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 4, comprising a collar formed in the distal end of the skirt

portion of the outside guide member, the collar inclining to the outside in the distal end direction of the outside guide member.

17. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 5, comprising a collar formed in the distal end of the skirt portion of the outside guide member, the collar inclining to the outside in the distal end direction of the outside guide member.

18. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 6, comprising a collar formed in the distal end of the skirt portion of the outside guide member, the collar inclining to the outside in the distal end direction of the outside guide member.

19. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 7, comprising a collar formed in the distal end of the skirt portion of the outside guide member, the collar inclining to the outside in the distal end direction of the outside guide member.

20. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 8, comprising a collar formed in the distal end of the skirt portion of the outside guide member, the collar inclining to the outside in the distal end direction of the outside guide member.

21. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 9, comprising a collar formed in the distal end of the skirt portion of the outside guide member, the collar inclining to the outside in the distal end direction of the outside guide member.

22. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 10, comprising a collar formed in the distal end of the skirt portion of the outside guide member, the collar inclining to the outside in the distal end direction of the outside guide member.

23. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 11, comprising a collar formed in the distal end of the skirt portion of the outside guide member, the collar inclining to the outside in the distal end direction of the outside guide member.

24. (original) A transfer needle assembly according to claim 12, comprising a collar formed in the distal end of the skirt portion of the outside guide member, the collar inclining to the outside in the distal end direction of the outside guide member.

25. (new) A transfer needle assembly comprising:

a cap-like outside guide member having a top surface and a skirt portion;

a tubular inside guide member that is positioned in the outside guide member; and

a puncture member which passes through the top surface of the outside guide member and has a proximal end and a distal end,

wherein:

the puncture member is a tubular member having at its proximal end a tip fitting portion for fitting a syringe tip and having at its distal end a puncture needle;

the puncture needle is provided with a liquid passage;

the liquid passage communicates with the tip fitting portion;

the inside guide member is capable of sliding along an inner wall of the skirt portion of the outside guide member from a position where a distal end of the puncture needle is retracted in an inside of the inside guide member, to a position where the distal end of the puncture needle projects outside of the inside guide member;

in the position where the distal end of the puncture needle is retracted in the inside of the inside guide member, the outside guide member and the inside guide member are releasably engaged with each other so as to be incapable of sliding; and

the engagement between the outside guide member and the inside guide member is releasable by insertion of a mouth portion of a vial into the inside guide member;

wherein the skirt portion of the outside guide member includes:

an annular projection provided in an inner wall of a distal end of the skirt portion;

a plurality of slits extending in an axial direction of the outside guide member formed in a portion of the skirt portion on a proximal end side with respect to the annular projection; and

a plurality of flexible engaging claws formed between pairs of the plurality of slits, the plurality of flexible engaging claws inclining toward an inside of the outside guide member in a distal end direction,

wherein a proximal end side of the inside guide member includes:

an annular projection provided in an outer wall of a proximal end;

a plurality of slits extending in an axial direction of the inside guide member formed in a proximal end portion of the inside guide member corresponding to the plurality of engaging claws; and

a plurality of flexible pushing claws formed between pairs of the plurality of slits, the plurality of flexible pushing claws inclining toward an inside of the inside guide member in a proximal end direction, and

wherein, at the position where the distal end of the puncture needle is receded in the inside of the inside guide member, the engaging claws and the proximal end of the inside guide member are engaged with each other and the annular projection of the outside guide member and the annular projection of the inside guide member are engaged with each other, and by inserting the mouth portion of the vial into the inside guide member, the pushing claws push the engaging claws to the outside, causing the engaging claws to deform and release the engagement between the outside guide member and the inside guide member.